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ABSTRACT

The document reports the suggestions offered by workshop participants regarding alternative responses to the problems of delinquent behavior patterns in youth. Recommendations offered include the following: priority must be given to services to children in need, with the goal of preventing entrance into the traditional justice system; programs should be encouraged with priority going to high risk locales where parents could attend parent education seminars; and helping professionals should be specifically trained for intensive work with troubled families and for involvement with resistant adolescents. Several models (including the Job Prep model of Hartford, Connecticut; the National Youth Project Using Minibikes, which offers community based services; and the Youth Diversionary Program of the Rhode Island Opportunities Industrialization Center) are considered. (SBH)

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ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEMS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR PATTERNS OF YOUTH

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INTRODUCTION:

On March 17 and 18, 1977, a workshop was held as part of the Northeast Regional Child Welfare League Conference to propose alternatives to and within the Juvenile Justice System. In October, 1976, seven Rhode Island representatives of various alternative or justice-related programs became involved in the workshop planning. They chose as the goal of the workshop the development of an advocate position paper addressed to the need for alternatives in New England and for increased emphasis on prevention--via group discussions using the experience of workshop participants. An unsuccessful attempt was made to obtain funding expertise and participation from other states in the planning phase. Workshop participants represented a variety of geographical areas.

Descriptions of Rhode Island programs were used at the outset of the workshop. Each presentor gave a brief synopsis including what gap his/her program was developed to fill, what services were provided as an alternative to or within the justice system, and what gaps have been discovered as a result of working with that system. Workshop participants then divided into small groups for the remainder of the first day where successes and failures of various programs were shared, perceived needs were cited,

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and different state responses compared. The second day was devoted to compiling the recommendations of each small group and the present authors took on the subsequent task of developing this position paper addressed to all those interested in hearing of possible alternative responses to the problems of delinquent behavior patterns of youth.

In the ensuing statement we have attempted to describe what the workshop participants believed were needs in the juvenile justice area. What we think is important about this position paper is that we have tried to describe models derived from several states to fill those needs. The authors have taken the liberty of extrapolating from some discussed needs and offering some additional possibilities for programmatic responses. Our purpose for presenting this paper is multifold. Earlier in the planning it became clear to the Rhode Island group that its State's responses to problems of predelinquent and delinquent youth were noticeably uncoordinated. In the workshop we discovered that lack of coordination was a cross-state problem---and a most serious one, since it affected the entire development of alternatives. We became strongly aware of the need for coordination to avoid duplication, to streamline the juvenile justice system, to provide complete service, and to advocate for uncovered needs. This became a major theme of the workshop and thus of this paper. We hope that this position paper can also lead to changes in funding patterns. Priorities should be established and funding programs, unavoidably not covered in the workshop, should be addressed to these priorities. We urge that this effort be coordinated in both the public and private sectors.

Our task is partially fulfilled by formulating this paper, but we presume yours will begin here. We trust that those who read and agree with

these concepts will feel the responsibility to become advocates for these ideas and programs in whatever way and on whatever level they are able.

The major theme of this paper is the need for coordinated, streamlined, and advocated services. The workshop participants propose these services be overseen by a Child Advocacy Office (CAO) in each state to insure the delivery of services to a youngster, guaranteeing the child does not get "lost in the shuffle." The CAO, established by legislative mandate, would be responsible for: (1) coordinating agency functions related to services; (2) acting as a funding conduit for all funds throughout the particular state; (3) carrying out needs assessments of the individual child while simultaneously using systems analyses to develop suitable plans (both immediate and long range); (4) evaluating performance in the above areas. The CAO would have a paid staff but would also rely on public volunteers as do similar Federal, State and local boards, commissions, and committees. Each agency involved with the Child Advocacy Office would have a commitment to the whole process detailed in this paper. A second prevailing and related concept identified by the workshop participants is the need for a continuum of child and family services, from education and early intervention at a community level to residential treatment centers and back to the community. Suggestions for each step in the continuum from primary to tertiary prevention were presented. This continuum must be flexible in concept and multifaceted with services available before and/or after any particular treatment approach has been tried. To be effective, this program must be closely monitored. The Child Advocacy Office would be empowered to oversee and enforce this entire approach.

Thirdly, prevention should prevail as a focus on all levels. Dr. Bertram Brown, Director of NIMH, in an article on social vs. clinical issues, noted: "Prevention necessitated the application of public health measures to mental health programs, and it is here the clinical practices feed most effectively on social issues and values associated with them. The emphasis on comprehensive services, on accessability, on continuum of care, all fall into place under the prevention rubric." [1] Likewise, in the area of juvenile justice, prevention needs to be a pervasive and consolidating focus. Workshop discussions focused on secondary prevention, especially early identification and intervention.

The workshop wholly supported the position that priority must be given to services to children in need, with the goal of preventing entrance into the traditional justice system. Early detection of difficulties is, therefore, essential; and once uncovered, the services necessary to intervene should be initiated. Extensive education and training concerning children's emotional, physical, educational, social and recreational needs are essential if prevention, detection, and service delivery is to be effective. The "early" in early detection refers to both the initial stages in the development of delinquent patterns and individual development (chronological age).

Preventative education might include parents being taught more about the developmental stages of growth and behavioral expectations of children at various ages. We would encourage programs with priority going to high-risk locales where parents could attend parent education seminars. These seminars could be held in conjunction with consumer education and economic planning seminars at convenient locations (e.g., welfare offices, local health centers, and community schools). Thought might be given to

providing social and/or material reinforcements for attending such workshops, as in most cases there would be a need for such incentives. To encourage participation, meetings could be held in the evenings with baby-sitting services provided. Media advertising campaigns might be utilized to educate parents and the public about age-appropriate behaviors of children/adolescents and the availability of community services. Also, an attempt should be made to involve the general public in accepting more responsibility for children. The care and protection of youth in the face of parental crisis or inadequacy necessitate the involvement of individuals in providing foster care, for example, and especially requires the informed acceptance of group homes in local communities.

Early detection of child or family difficulties encompasses those involved with the child as he first leaves the home setting--teachers, clergy, and physicians--who hold a primary responsibility. For example, teachers must be educated to the recognition of problems as they might appear at the various stages of growth. There must be an awareness that the quiet, non-acting out youngster might be as troubled as the hyperactive child. In essence, there must be attention devoted to the individual and his/her particular needs. Schools must provide smaller classes for special programs and attention to special needs youngsters with the realization that early identification is futile without the means to offer early remediation. The federal mandate, PL 94-192, represents a beginning step in this direction.

If prevention has failed, if early detection has revealed an unremedied difficulty, and if the youngster enters the early phases of agency involvement, then quality service is mandatory if the child is to be diverted away

from the traditional justice system. To this end we advocate that the helping professions (medical, social work, and mental health) be specifically trained for intensive work with troubled families and for involvement with resistant, involuntary adolescents. It is essential that caseloads remain small enough to allow for intensive treatment and that caseload size be dependent upon both the quality and quantity of supportive services offered. Levels of cooperation and understanding need to be developed between lawyers and social service persons so the "best interests of the child" mandate can be fulfilled. These two groups may often view each other as being at cross purposes, and a lack of communication/cooperation can result in inappropriate planning or placement of a child.

A concerted effort needs to be made to increase the awareness of the juvenile court of available community resources when planning for a youngster. The appropriateness or inappropriateness of a judge's referral must be pointed out. Judges should be aware of the need for consistency and follow through when dealing with adolescents and that many individuals have deficits which may hamper their ability to live up to certain imposed requirements or controls. Probation departments or social agencies may be of service in alerting the court to these issues. The judges themselves must become more familiar with the emotional as well as the physical needs of those who come under their charge.

Police officers, particularly juvenile officers, represent one professional group often overlooked in terms of formal training for dealing with troubled youth. More understanding and education are needed to be given to police officers with respect to the causes, epidemiology and handling of juvenile problems. Techniques of crisis intervention,

knowledge of adolescent psychology, and support services to help patrolmen handle youngsters at this age can often determine the future course for an offender. If approached in one way, the gang on the street corner may move on when asked; in another way, physical violence might be the outcome. A youth caught breaking and entering can be helped to take advantage of diversionary programs; a status offender and his family can be encouraged to seek professional help by informed police officers. In some areas, college level, credit courses are offered to veteran policemen in crisis intervention acquainting the officers with the possible causes of crises, emotional reactions to crises, and techniques that can be utilized to help very distraught people reduce their fear, anxiety, and potential for violence. New recruits at the police academies should be exposed to courses in developing these same skills. A new and innovative program of the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council has recently been established to increase New Hampshire police officers' knowledge in the handling of juveniles and thereby hopefully increasing the probability of diverting the majority of initial contacts from adjudication. Included in the curriculum is delinquency causation, prevention, diversion, and general processing considerations and limitations. While now a five-week local program, it is hoped by its developers that the sequence will be offered as a training ground to officers outside New Hampshire.

An experiential method of increasing understanding and knowledge is the Police Crisis Team. Such teams have been operating for four years in three Rhode Island towns. A social worker and a policeman work in the evening and are available in family crises, neighborhood disputes, problems with juveniles, suicides, and drug/alcohol abuse calls. In plain clothes

and in unmarked cars, the teams go to the homes and interview people with the goals of: making a quick assessment of the nature and causes of the problem; using crisis intervention techniques to help the family resolve its present problems; and setting up a treatment plan with the family, which might include a future visit from the team and usually a referral to a community agency. A high percentage of calls to the existing crisis teams have involved family juvenile problems. The teams have not only directly helped many families with their problems but have become much more attuned to the kinds of difficulties, family pressures, and developmental problems that can lead to these sorts of difficulties. They have found it easier to talk with youth, to relate to them, and to move them into programs where help may be forthcoming. Obviously, the learning interchange between the social worker and the policeman inherent in such a model serves to bridge a gap between services that have in the past seemed suspicious of each other.

While these support and intervention systems would benefit from educative programs, an effort must also be made to encourage educational/community attempts to address the developing adolescent's own sense of self, present and future. When adolescent alienation and identity crises pervade all socioeconomic strata in our society, more attention needs to be focused by schools and community agencies on the exploration by adolescents of roles they are soon to enter. Paramount would be educative/supportive programs focused on sexuality, its origins, expression, differences, and myths. We in the human services are continually struck with the lack of information and misinformation of many of our teenage clients concerning sexual biology, birth control, and behavior between sexes. A programmatic

sequence devoted to sexual/emotional development must become part of all elementary and secondary curricula. The areas of marriage and parenthood must also become foci of structured educational efforts. Training in the "reality" of marriage--its demands and pitfalls as well as meaningfulness and rewards--might be accomplished via role-playing experiences in senior high school classes, several models of which presently exist. Parenthood also needs to be seen for its stresses, drawbacks, and rewards. Beginning in junior high, courses could be developed around role-reversal strategems (e.g. teenager as married, single, or separated parent) and role empathy experiences (e.g. pupils talking with parents about parenting). The concept of family--a notion in some disorganization--might thus be strengthened or at least examined in the light of modern stresses and expectations.

Many of those stresses on families contribute to the increasingly evident frequency of child abuse and neglect. The mandatory reporting of suspected or known abuse/neglect must be adopted by all states and the mandated procedures must be followed by schools, hospitals, private physicians, recreational group leaders....everyone. Informed awareness of the signs and the effects of abuse, procedures to safeguard anonymity of the reporter, and the process of reporting must be provided in each community. Availability of hot lines, Parents Anonymous Groups, crisis homes for parents and children may help reduce the amount of physical and emotional abuse some children now suffer.

On all levels, individuals in any capacity dealing with children be they parents, relatives, friends, court, or social service personnel have the responsibility for both caring for and protecting those children. Each of us needs to know more about children as developing humans who need

certain input and a minimal, expectable, security-giving environment in which to mature into physically and emotionally healthy individuals. Failure of any part of a child's familial or environmental surroundings can lead to profound difficulties which often find the child later involved with the justice system. With individuals trained in early detection and quality remediation service, more of these youngsters can be identified earlier and given the assistance they need to continue maturing appropriately.

It should be evident that workshop participants were convinced that a major thrust in prevention must be the development of early identification strategies--evaluation/service programs addressed to both young children and to youngsters "at risk" for the development of interpersonal conflict and/or antisocial behavior. Paradigms now exist for the assessment and identification of precritical conditions (e.g. visual/auditory deficits, motor handicaps, learning difficulties, nutritional deficits, adaptive behavior deficiencies, etc.). However, identification measures have to be tied to researchable service programs if they are to be of ultimate value. Child Find screenings for preschoolers where attempts are made to develop intervention plans before and including school entrance need to be expanded. Recent federal legislation (PL 94-142) sets the stage for states to establish educational "Bills of Rights" mandating the provisions of early evaluation of learning needs and problems as well as developing individual programs for each presently unmet need. Advocacy, dissemination of information, and monitoring of such efforts must fall upon parental/community groups to insure implementation and success. An example to be studied (and probably improved upon) is the Chapter 766 legislation now in place in Massachusetts.

There exists a growing literature (Berman,[2] Compton[3]) which identifies correlates between juvenile delinquent behavioral patterns and undiagnosed/untreated learning disabilities (marked lags in basic skill developments). Impaired learning abilities accrue a mass of frustration, angry dissatisfaction and self-defeating aversion to training in those skills so basic to an occupational future as well as life satisfaction. Thus, the conference particpants strongly endorsed further exploration of identifying learning disabilities and remediation programs early in the school years so as to decrease the possibility of later frustrated acting out. In addition, more sophisticated diagnostic workups of juvenile offenders before the Court needs to be done. The concept of "at risk" is too extensive to be treated here. But any factors which place a youngster in jeopardy with respect to academic/social progress need to be investigated. One interesting parameter suggested by some program participants is the possible debilitating influence of bilingual educational programs vs. more emphasis on ESL (English as a second language) programs. Certainly if any of the above is to be seriously considered, dramatic changes in government and private funding patterns will be needed, changes away from patchwork, "band-aid" reactive responses and towards organized, extensive, preventative orientations.

Upon one's entering the juvenile justice system proper, the dual goals of decreasing institutionalization and maintaining adolescents in the community should constitute the initial basis of planning. Juvenile courts have the unique problem of dealing with the immensely complex area of status offenses, actions which are considered illegal when undertaken by an individual of a certain age but are no longer illegal when an individual attains a

prescribed age. While local legislation may establish others, the most common status offenses are: school truancy, repeated disregard of reasonable or lawful parental authority, running away from home, use and possession of intoxicating beverages. Youth found engaged in these types of activities are labeled as status offenders, Children In Need of Services (CHINS) or Person In Need of Services (PINS). These labels convey the implicit placing of blame solely on the youth, yet these types of activities can, in fact, represent a reasonable way of dealing with a very difficult family, educational and/or social situation. We believe that consideration of the entire environment of the youth could be encouraged, and we suggest a more inclusive label, Families In Need of Service (FINS), as proposed by the National Juvenile Justice Task Force, to support an emphasis upon assisting families. FINS youth have special needs and should not be further labeled as delinquent, the most damaging consequence of which appears when these youth are committed to institutions where they are treated as delinquents and are in constant contact with youths who have been adjudicated delinquent. The workshop supported the position that a child under the FINS jurisdiction should not be confined in any institution to which adjudicated delinquents are committed or which is locked or fenced in.

In dealing with FINS, juvenile courts should explore all community and voluntary alternatives. Existing facilities and programs should be evaluated in regard to their appropriateness to handle the multiple problems of these families. In that the court is the last resource in regard to FINS, consideration should be given to increasing the power of judges in regard to providing services for these families. Jurisdiction in these cases might be extended over the child, parents, or guardians and all institutions or

agencies supplying services to the family i.e. school, mental health clinic, etc. Though this is a controversial issue, we believe that a judge with the assistance of adequate consultation and proper training as mentioned earlier, should be able to exercise this authority.

In order to increase the effectiveness of responding to FINS, an increase in temporary shelter facilities has to be encouraged whether they be short-term homes for runaways, Host Homes in which individual families agree to take in a troubled youth for a few days or a proctor type of program such as is presently being operated in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The proctor concept entails the recruitment of young adults who individually provide 24 hour supervision and supportive care of one youth for a period of three to six weeks in the proctor's own home. Proctors are screened, paid, and given supportive supervision. Another program originating in California and currently being tested in Connecticut (Family Counseling Sacramento 601 Model) is an LEAA-funded, 24 hour crisis intervention situation offered to runaway or other status offenders picked up by police. Counselors meet immediately with the child and follow-up counseling or other assistance is offered the next day. This service can be provided up to three times for the same youngster before the child is involved further in the justice system. Such interim facilities can provide a needed resource to the Court in offering a "cooling down" period during which engagement of youth and their families, in beginning to look at their situation, might be more easily accomplished.

These alternatives to temporary incarceration need to be paralleled by community-based efforts to respond to the educational development of FINS youth and first offenders. Included would be the expansion of alternative learning programs, prevocational and vocational awareness programs and

basic academic sequences in non-traditional settings, all of which might function to entice a youth to reenter a structured learning environment. Alternative high schools now exist in a number of communities, yet their structure, function, and effectiveness vary to such an extent that assessment of such need to be made before advocating their proliferation.

All those who counsel troubled adolescents feel the frustrating lack of real vocational opportunities for their clients--opportunities both for developing awareness of vocational possibilities and for actual employment. Recent governmental attempts--Youth Corps, CETA, 70,001--are beginning, but limited steps. What would be fruitful from our perspective would be coordinated, local efforts to combine work incentives with apprenticeship programs in diversified occupational areas. Many inner-city, poor, delinquent youth remain unaware of the number, variety, and demand characteristics of most vocations. Many such youth are also "turned off" by traditional vocational models linked to school. Community-based programs with direct linkages to commercial, industrial, and labor organizations might have a better chance of motivating, enlisting, and monitoring youth. An example might be the Opportunities Industrial Center model (OIC) extrapolated to include 14-18 year olds. The role of labor unions in job awareness and vocational choice needs to be examined in hopes of developing apprentice-type arrangements for adolescents who wish to enter the work force.

A model which appears responsive to some of the needs expressed above is that of Job Prep, a presently functioning program in Hartford, Connecticut. Administered jointly by the Department of Children and Youth Services and the juvenile court with funds provided by the State Department of Labor, the

program seeks to address vocational awareness needs of adolescent youth (14-17) via job readiness training of basic skills. Components include: orientation and testing, job site visits, work simulation, job interviews, demonstration of relationships between skills and work, actual skill-building, and career planning. The chief criterion for program participation is not likelihood of success but demonstrated failure to benefit from school and from other treatment programs. Remedial or continued education is encouraged and provided but not mandated. From the program description, it appears to serve poor, multiproblem offenders who dropped out of school and face an uncertain future. While jobs and job readiness are of real import, several workshop participants strongly advocated the development of coping skills and self-image building reported by Outward Bound-type intensive experiences funded by state or local resources. Growth in self-reliance and personal sense of competence accrue to the youth who faces the challenges of Outward Bound. Those qualities appear to generalize beyond the experience to the youth's functioning in his/her environment.

Integral to the idea of community-based services is the concept of outreach, defined as reaching out into the community by agency workers extending beyond traditional services and settings. Outreach seems to rise and fall in popularity but we see it as essential to the goals of decreasing institutionalization and increasing community maintenance of the child. One program model which attempts to incorporate outreach and home maintenance is the diversionary program, National Youth Project Using Minibikes (NYPYM). A delinquency-prevention program for 11-15 year old youngsters who are in difficulty with the police, schools, or the community, NYPUM emphasizes working with the total family in an active reaching out to bring about positive

change. Twenty-four hour crisis intervention is provided when needed. Program components include: group rap sessions, advocacy and liaison by NYPUM personnel with schools and family members, training in relationship skills, and in some cases, weekly group therapy sessions. In addition, the program's unique component of minibike riding on Saturday serves as an initial attraction and as a behavioral reinforcer. Contracts are established with each youngster in the intake stages focusing on the problems of referral. Different attempts are made to engage the whole family in the process of responding to and supporting the youth's efforts, while personnel often act as a liaison between the school and the parents who may find it economically difficult to get time from work to go to the school. Thus, peer pressure, behavioral reinforcement, and environmental manipulation conspire to increase the probability of positive change. The cost factor for NYPUM is less than $500 annually per youth, whereas to house a youth in a state facility was estimated as costing between $15,000 and $25,000 per year.

The above model is one of several programmatic responses advocated by workshop participants under the rubric of diversionary efforts which attempt to divert a pre-delinquent/delinquent youth away from the all-too-frequent cycle of self-defeating behavioral patterns following an initial "brush with the law." Another multi-faceted program with this goal is the Youth Diversionary Program (YDP) of the Rhode Island Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC). Over three years of development, YDP has evolved to provide a number of services to poor, inner-city first offenders: (1) an advocate-counselor for each youth acts as an agent of change in the youngster's (or family's) network of responses to the stresses of inner-city life; (2) an

alternative learning program in which a number of youngsters' educational deficits and strengths are addressed in a small format and (3) an extensive recreational component. Soon a group home and a vocational preparation sequence will be added to incorporate under one umbrella a coordinated variety of services.

Some community-based programs often bring into focus that valuable and practically untapped resource of volunteers within the communities themselves. Through a relatively small financial outlay, concerned citizens can be enlisted and trained to work with youngsters in cooperation with professionals. Properly trained volunteers can greatly enrich the life experiences of a youth under a Big Brother/Big Sister-type format or in a program established as a direct adjunct to a Probation Department, Mental Health Clinic, Juvenile Court, etc. Workers in many community programs have become increasingly aware of the talents, strengths and capabilities of local people in helping others once they are enlisted and supported. For example, one area of community involvement might be in a network of Host Homes in which individual families volunteer to take in troubled youth for a few days while matters are investigated or conflicts cool down. Such a network presently exists in several areas of Connecticut.

The benefits of involving volunteers in the development of alternatives within the juvenile justice system appear numerous: engaging people from the youth's own "turf"; a relative low cost factor; giving the public a "direct stake" in the system by helping them see what is being done (not done) for juveniles; diminishing the oft-encountered resistances of some adolescents to helping professionals (social workers, probation officers, psychologists, etc.) and enhancing a sense of sharing and community which may be so lacking in so many lives.

While conference participants encouraged increased efforts to work with pre-delinquent adolescents within the community, all recognized that the advocated continuum of services needs to include out-of-home placement possibilities. Whereas presently the factors leading to a decision for out-of-home placement are often varied and unclear, such a decision might be made easier if a network of interim alternatives like those described above was available to the decision-maker. When the decision is for longer-term placement, a number of interrelated, yet physically separate, adolescent group homes would provide a needed alternative to institutional care. The move to community residences for delinquent youth has been slow and filled with false starts. Community preparation, adequate training of surrogate parents and behaviorally-specific goals, as well as rules to be contractually established, need to be considered before physically establishing such homes. With a reasonable set of safeguards and concerted attempts at neighborhood input in the planning, many of the reactions to such homes might be diminished. There is beginning to appear in the literature anecdotal as well as cost-benefit data regarding the experience of the state of Massachusetts in de-institutionalizing its response to the delinquent population via community residences. Anyone considering developing such a program in their own area would be well advised to research that literature in order to avoid "inventing the wheel all over again." Conference participants previously or currently involved in group home planning advocated strongly the avoidance of bureaucratic/political roadblocks by purchase-of-service arrangements for private organizations/agencies to run the homes.

Such group living arrangements could serve as "feeders" for a number of foster homes with more specialized training of foster parents able to meet the needs of a growing number of children in need of placement away from their natural parents. A system of levels of care must be developed in which children with special needs will be placed with families whose training to deal with them has been more intense. Diagnostic, supportive casework and treatment services must be made available to these families in recognition of the difficult task they have assumed and in a concerted effort to keep these children out of other types of placements. Monetary renumeration and support service availability should also be based upon a sliding scale system with those foster homes offering the most intensive care for the most handicapped children receiving the most monetary and supportive assistance. Subsidized adoption assays (e.g. in New Jersey) must be closely studied.

Similar levels of care and intensity of training must be made available within a halfway house system for older adolescents, some of whom may need a further interim step towards independence represented by a subsidized apartment living arrangement with support services.

These alternatives before and after residential placement need not only be established or encouraged but also coordinated into a network of services. Effort needs to be placed on helping existing agencies define their role(s) and establish themselves in a continuum of care that can meet the needs of juvenile offenders. This is very difficult to do given the fiscal restraints imposed on many agencies as well as the unclear definitions of what their mission is supposed to be. Too often juvenile offenders will leave an

institution with a prescription well documented for continued help. Frequently, this is not followed, eithe. through the resistance of the offender or the fa't that the system of agencies does not have a way of picking up a youngster, reaching out to him and making sure he receives the proper help. By the same token, once a juvenile offender has been placed or discharged, residential treatment centers are frequently reluctant to take a youngster back if the need occurs in the future. One agency which suggests an alternative set of responses is "Talbot House" in Pennsylvania. At the core is a residential treatment center for female juvenile offenders who spend varying amounts of time with a professionally trained staff in coping with many of their problems. A treatment plan is established at the outset to work towards their ultimate discharge from the program. Once a juvenile offender is ready to leave the program, she may then be placed in a group home maintained by the agency. This group living encourages the youngster to gradually move out to the community and functions like a half-way house where the young adults can try out their new social skills and new coping mechanisms, with increasingly reduced restrictions. After a time in the half-way house, there is another component whereby the young women are set up in their own apartments where they can get their own jobs, pay some rent, be their own housekeepers, etc. While residing in the community, they still have available to them the staff of the residential center, continued discussions, psychotherapy, and group treatment. Thus, a continuum of services functions under one agency umbrella which allows for continuous monitoring of a child, giving them help and support while gradually encouraging them to move away from the program and testing their new skills while moving back and forth between these program components.

We began with a plea for coordination and we end in describing a model which struggles to coordinate levels of alterna ves for youthful offenders. In between, we have enumerated a number of needs, ventured possible options, and talked briefly of existing alternative responses. Specific information about any program mentioned may be obtained by writing to the first author who will attempt to monitor and answer requests. Our main purpose was to stimulate thinking beyond traditional, rather encrusted, responses and to convey a sense of optimism in that alternatives do exist and that "hope springs eternal" even within the minds of over-burdened human service professionals who daily struggle with the immense problems of youthful delinquency and family disorganization. Your consideration of the ideas presented herein will hopefully lead to your becoming increasingly involved in the development of alternative responses to the problems of delinquent behavior patterns of youth.

FOOTNOTES

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2. Berman, Allan. "Delinquents are Disabled" in Youth in Trouble, edited by Mary Lou Kratoville. San Rafael, California: Academic Therapy Publications, 1974.

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